

CLAIMS

2. The control system of claim 32 wherein said electronic control unit includes memory with a first area for storing the first information and a second area accessible by said external electronic device for storing the second information and receiving data from said external electronic device.
3. The control system of claim 32 wherein said connection means is operatively connectable to said electronic control unit and said external electronic device.
4. The control system of claim 3 wherein said connection means includes an interfacing module mounted on said electronic control unit.
5. The control system of claim 32 wherein said electronic control unit includes a microcontroller having a communication line operatively connectable to said external electronic device.
6. The control system of claim 32 wherein said electronic control unit includes means for transmitting information relating to the operation status of the household appliance.
7. The control system of claim 32 wherein said external electronic device includes means for receiving information relating to the operating status of the household device appliance.

8. The control system of claim 32 wherein said external electronic device includes a display device.

9. The control system of claim 8 wherein said external electronic device displays on said display device status information relating to the operating status of the household appliance.

10. The control system of claim 32 wherein said electronic control system unit includes a first clock, and said external electronic device includes a second clock, for updating the first clock.

11. The control system of claim 32 wherein said external electronic device includes a personal computer.

12. The control system of claim 11 further including a data bus operatively connectable to said personal computer and the appliance.

13. The control system of claim 32 wherein said external electronic device comprises a remote control and said connection means [comprises] includes a signal receiver for receiving signals from said remote control.

14. The control system of claim 32 wherein said external electronic device includes a memory for storing a management program for executing said second functions.

15. The control system of claim 14 wherein said management program includes control routines for avoiding improper programming of the household appliance.

16. The control system of claim 15 wherein said management program further includes utility functions for operating the household appliance.

18. The control system of claim 9 wherein said status information includes parameters identifying the progress of a program being performed by the appliance.

19. The control system of claim 9 wherein said status information includes diagnostic messages for the technical servicing of the appliance.

20. The control system of claim 14 wherein said management program includes a cookbook.

21. The control system of claim 14 wherein said management program includes a database for food preserved within a refrigerator appliance.
22. The method of claim 33 wherein said second functions comprise checking the operation of devices internal to the appliance.
23. The method of claim 33 wherein said second functions include changing the configuration of heating elements of a cooking appliance during a cooking process.
24. The method of claim 17 wherein said second functions include advising when a given food stored in a refrigerating appliance is approaching an expiry date.
25. The method of claim 33 wherein said second functions include controlling the performance of a washing cycle during scheduled time periods.
26. The method of claim 33 wherein said second functions include indicating what recipe or recipes can be prepared with a limited number of available ingredients.

27. The method of claim 33 wherein said external electronic device includes a memory for storing cooking recipes.

28. The method of claim 17 wherein said external electronic device includes a display for displaying baking process parameters.

29. The method of claim 33 wherein said external electronic device includes a processor for designing cooking recipes.

30. The method of claim 33 wherein said external electronic device includes a processor for adjusting a recipe as a function of the number of people to be served.

31. The method of claim 33 wherein said external electronic device includes a processor for managing purchase lists of foodstuff.

32. An appliance control system for use with a household appliance that includes an appliance control panel, the system including:

- A. an electronic control unit for controlling the operations of an appliance, the electronic control unit containing stored first information and second

information for controlling predetermined first functions and second functions of the appliance,

B. a selector for supplying to the electronic control unit data that selects one or more first functions and provides related parameter values, the first functions corresponding to appliance operations that are selectable using the appliance control panel;

C. connection means for interfacing with an external electronic device, the connection means transferring from the external electronic device to the electronic control unit data that selects one or more second functions and provides related parameter values,

wherein the electronic control unit controls the operations of the appliance in accordance with the first information and the data supplied by the selector or in accordance with the second information and the data supplied by the external electronic device through the connection means.

33. A method for programming an electronically controlled appliance that includes a control panel, the method including the steps of:

A. storing in a first portion of memory a first set of information for operating the appliance in accordance with one or more first functions that correspond to operations that are selectable using the control panel;

- B. executing the first functions by accessing the first portion of memory;
- C. storing in a second portion of memory a second set of information for
operating the appliance in accordance with one or more second functions
that correspond to operations that are not selectable using the control panel;
and
- D. executing the second functions in accordance with data provided by
interfacing an external electronic device with the second portion of the
memory.